

Sample

A School Through Time

200 years in the life of
Antingham and Southrepps School and its people

Margaret Dowland



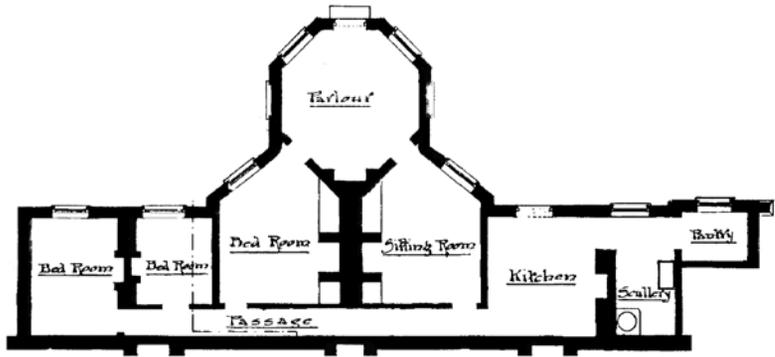
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The school house was the home of every Headmaster until 1971. It had three bedrooms, a parlour, sitting room, kitchen, scullery and lobby. It also had a large vaulted cellar, which is inaccessible today. It is believed to have been largely unchanged apart from the conversion of one of the bedrooms to a bathroom. This plan shows how it would have been in 1826.



Cricket team? This photograph from 1914 seems to be suggesting they may be a team, with the presence of the bats and the fact that all the boys wear ties and very similar outfits. It is totally unlike any other of the school pictures.

Poppyland Publishing is pleased to announce *A School Through Time: 200 years in the life of Antingham and Southrepps School and its people* by Margaret Dowland.

This is the history of Antingham and Southrepps School, built in 1826 by the 3rd Lord Suffield—a man ahead of his time in believing that the children of ordinary poor agricultural workers deserved to be educated.

The book describes the evolution of the school, from the time when it provided education for the children of the workers on Lord Suffield's estate, to its adoption by the local authority for the benefit of five parishes, until it became part of the North Norfolk Academy Trust in 2014.

The result of painstaking research, the story is first set in the context of the rural society of the area, and the developments in government policy concerning education. The architecture of the building is described through its many changes, along with the senior staff who strove to bring learning to its pupils. Some of the more recent of those pupils have drawn on their memories to provide the author with some fascinating anecdotes.

Copiously illustrated throughout, this book will be a rich mine of information and reminiscence for the school's many alumni, as well as anyone interested in how the education of the children of working families was developed in one rural Norfolk community.

About the author

Margaret Dowland was brought up in Basingstoke, training as a nurse at St Mary's Paddington. She has lived in Norfolk since 2003 and is a keen conservation volunteer on Southrepps Common. She was a governor at the School and became fascinated by its history.



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The school buildings



Enlarged image of pen and ink drawing on the 1835 plan. The building to the rear is the school house. There are three windows to the left-hand side of the porch rather than the four that are there today.

Below: St Margaret's, Thorpe Market 2020.

Bottom: Front of the school 2021.

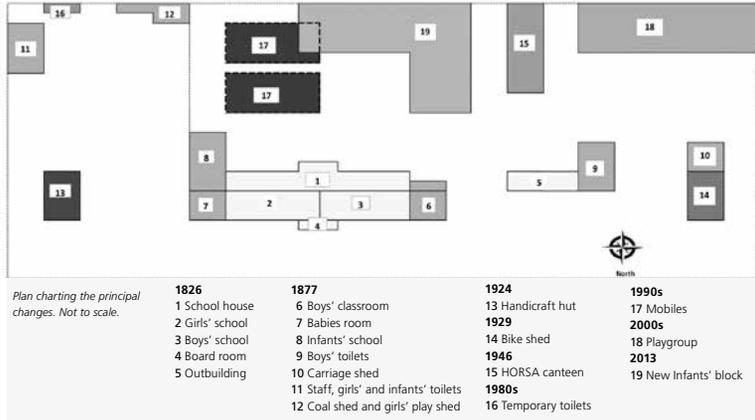
The school was built on Lord Suffield's land on the boundary of Antingham and Southrepps parishes, midway between Thorpe Market and Bradfield. It was surrounded by farmland on three sides, with Southrepps Common to the North. This remains the case today. .

What is striking, if one is familiar with the building, is the size of the end window. It also looks very ecclesiastical. This may well be explained by looking at St Margaret's Church in Thorpe Market, c1796. Both buildings were built for Lord Suffield, and it is assumed to be by the same builder, who is believed to be a Mr Wood. Little is known of him except that he is thought to have been involved in the construction of the Pyramid mausoleum at Blickling.

The design is described as Gothic and the materials used are stone and flint. This was a prestigious building, far above a simple flint cottage. Not only are the flints knapped but those on the pinnacles are squared as well; this would have been time consuming and expensive of resources. This suggests that Lord Suffield was sending a message with this school. It has been built to the same high standards as the church; it is perhaps saying this is an important building, education matters. If you look at other buildings in the villages from the same period this one really stands out.



A School Through Time



The school clock, dated 1826, has two faces – one in each of the original school rooms. Unfortunately, it has not worked for many years; indeed the hands on the other face are missing.

Rear view of the school taken prior to 1877. It shows the school house. Behind is the school and on the left the outbuilding. On the 1835 plan the rear of the school house is all marked as playground. Antingham and Southrepps School.

1826

The original buildings were: the school consisting of two school rooms, the school house, the board room or porch, and an outbuilding.

The school consisted of two large school rooms. There was no internal access between the school and the school house. The outbuilding shown on the old photograph was probably a storehouse.

1877

In 1877 the school was extended. The original end walls were taken down and rebuilt further

out, adding an extra bay at each end of the building. The octagonal pinnacles were painstakingly replicated.

This end of the building was the Boys' school, opening into their playground. The building in the foreground, which is the original outbuilding, was also extended to become the boys' offices, as toilets were known.

Opposite the boys' offices was the stabling for the managers' horses and carriages, for use when attending meetings; it also doubled up as the boys' play shed. When the managers applied for a loan to extend the school they were refused money to build the carriage shed,



The school buildings



unless it could be used by the children as a play shed at other times.

The main building was divided into the Boys' and Girls' schools. In 1877 the internal arrangement was now two large school rooms and two smaller classrooms, the Boys' school being at the west end.



Far left: View of the west end of the school. Note the difference in the windows from the 1835 pen and ink sketch. The original was one large window, now it is two smaller, less ornate windows. The door seen in the photograph is to a new lobby.

Above left: The boys' toilets (number 9 on the plan). They were open to the roof as requested by HM inspector in 1893 so that there would be better light and ventilation. It has had many uses over the years. Once internal toilets were installed it has been used as the school library and computer suite, as well as a quiet area for group work.



Far left: The carriage shed (number 10 on the plan). In 2002, with money from the Judith Bartram Trust, the carriage shed was converted into a music room for the school. It is also used as a meeting room and a quiet area for small groups to work.

Far left: The partition is shown fixed back in its folded position. The ceiling was lowered in 1983.

Left: Porch and board room (number 4 on the plan). It was in the board room that the managers held their meetings. One ex-pupil who attended the school from 1939–1945 remembers having hot food served from a solid range in the board room; they were charged 5d a day. Mrs Hare also used it as the school office.



As part of the 150th anniversary celebrations in 1976 the bricked-up doorway was faced with knapped flints with a date inscription above. In 1996 the flints were removed and a door reinstated. The inscription remains. Antingham and Southweps School.

school was blocked up. In 1976 a new oil boiler was installed in the former medical room.

The Infants' school was built at the south-east end of the main building and the east end of the school house.

The minute books record that the managers employed Mr Matthew Daniel Welden as builder for all the extension work. The timetable for the alterations was that the school would shut on the 20th July 1877 and re-open in the September, an unrealistic timescale considering the amount of work involved. The main school

actually re-opened on the 28th January 1878 and the Infants' school not until the 8th April. As Mr Welden had been unable to complete the works by the agreed date he forfeited £5 for every week's delay. These extensions cost £1350 (the equivalent of about £150,000 in 2020). This was paid for by a loan from the Public Works Loan Commissioners. Unfortunately, due perhaps to the time pressures, the work was not well done. On the 16th July 1880, following a storm, one of the pinnacles was damaged. The managers sent a letter to Mr Chapman, the superintendent of the works, stating that poor materials and bad workmanship had led to the failure of the pinnacle. Eventually Mr Chapman agreed to carry out the repairs at cost price. This was just a precursor of worse to come.

The managers commissioned a survey of the buildings just seven years after the new extended school opened. Here is a summary of its findings, from a letter dated 6th October 1883 from Mr John Pearce of Surrey Street, Norwich:

The new parts of the building are seriously cracked and settled, both in themselves and at the junctions with the old work. The worst section needing the greater portion of the wall to be pulled down, a proper foundation secured and the wall rebuilt in a sound

Infants' school (number 8 on the plan). Although the Infants' school was built in the same style its pinnacles are nowhere near as ornate as those on the main part of the building. The buttresses are also different.



The school buildings

The Teaching continues to be undiligent and the Boys have done their work well. A good deal of the building work seems to have been badly done and to be in a dangerous condition. The Registers should be checked

HM Inspector's report from October 1880 actually states that the building is in a dangerous condition. Boys' log 1st October 1880.

and proper manner. The walls of the classroom at the boys' end need underpinning the fractures cut out and refilled. The boys' porch must also be cut out and stopped.

The gutters are inadequate. The walls need repointing, wood work repainted and flashing repaired.

On the inside the walls with the fractures will have to be made good and replastered. All rooms require to be painted and white-washed as well as the window and door frames and stoves repointed.

The South West angle of the Infant school is injured by damp caused by a defect in the

roof as well as other areas of the school and the school house.

The boundary wall to the west side of the boys' playground requires to be taken down and rebuilt as well as a portion of the headmaster's garden wall.

Cause of the Failure:

I attribute the cause of settlement and fracture to be insecure foundations, bad material and worse workmanship.

The repairs to the whole school were finally carried out in the harvest (summer) holiday of 1884.

16th Part of the ceiling in the Infant School fell on Thursday morning. On Friday morning the ceiling was fixed in the Class Room.
23rd Infant scholars, on the Mixed School, and Class Room while the ceiling in Infant School was all taken down and repaired. The 1st Standard all worked together with Miss Trollope, and the 2nd and 3rd class infants with P.T. and Monks.
30th Infants returned to their own rooms on Wednesday. The ceiling to be finished during the Harvest holiday. School year ends this week.

Whilst waiting for action to be taken on this report the ceiling of the Infants' school fell down. The gallery was damaged and the infants had to be taught in the mixed school and classroom whilst repairs were carried out. Boys' log 16th June 1884.

September 12th School opened on Monday Sep 8th after 5 weeks holiday. The repairs were not finished in time to begin on the 1st

Again, the builder and managers had underestimated the time-scale of the works required and the holidays were extended by a week. Boys' log 12th September 1884.

The full survey report of the school carried out in 1883 by John B. Pearce.

The hand writing is beautiful even though the contents make dismal reading for the school board. He pulls no punches in identifying who should take the blame for the defects.

National Archive Kew ED
21/12653 1877-1910

Surrey School Search
October 1883
EDUCATION
3 NOV 1883
No 16093

Abingham W. J. School Board

Dear Sir

According to the wish of your Board I came to see your letter of the 10th Sept last. I have carefully surveyed the School Buildings situated in the parish of Abingham

I find the new parts of the building built some five years since are seriously cracked and settled both in themselves and at the junctions with old work the worst case is on the North wall of the class room at the East end, it will be necessary for the greater portion of this wall to be pulled down, a proper foundation secured and the wall rebuilt in a sound and proper manner

The walls of the class room at the end of Boys School are also settled and cracked, but I am of opinion that wall can be underpinned, the fractures cut out and filled in without rebuilding

Boys porch has also a settlement, this must be cut out and stopped

The whole of the eaves gutters require clearing out fixed to proper fall and additional stricks of down pipes to take the water away, as they are too small & flow over, the present down pipes are too far apart, there is also a length of gutter required over Boys porch and connections must be made to the drains from the new down pipes see note

The walls both stone & brick work, string, all round door & window frames require pointing generally, the slate of pipes to the buttresses. The wood and iron work to be painted & the slate & lead flashings repaired

Interior

The walls of class rooms will require to have the fractures made good both in the cement plaster, and plastering clean and where the walls are rebuilt must be replastered,

88/16093

The Schools Entrances & Board room throughout require to be painted & whitewashed & the window & door frames and sills pointed round.

The South West angle of Infant's school is injured by damp caused by a defect in the roof, the wall also between Masters Laundry & Infant's School suffers also from the same cause.

The cement dado wants to be made good, the gallery pointed round, the casement to West window repaired & proper fastenings fixed and the brick back to stove repaired.

Boundary Walls

The wall near the Green on the west side of the Entrance to the boys play ground requires to be taken down & rebuilt, it is bulged outwards & is likely in the case of a severe gale to tumble down. A small portion of the wall near the Masters garden near the Boys Dock should be rebuilt in cement.

Cause of Failure

I attribute the cause of Settlement & cracks to be insecure foundations, bad material, and worse workmanship.

Estimate

I am of opinion the cost of carrying out the necessary repairs in a proper and workmanlike manner enumerated in this report will be about £700.0.0

I am, Sir

Yours truly

John B. Pearce

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